

DRAFT Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations from Committee Recommendations Summary Report:

Affordable Housing

1. We recommend the City Council adopt a policy to maximize investment of affordable housing bonds in effective transit corridors, including in Transit-Oriented Developments. The committee approved the motion 6-0.
2. We recommend the City use public lands to help leverage affordable housing investments (example: affordable housing within the Crestview T.O.D. on land owned by Capital Metro). The committee approved the motion 6-0.
3. We recommend the City Council explore funding for existing affordable housing programs to help cover the gap in affordable housing funding in the period before any newly approved affordable housing bonds would be issued. The committee approved the motion 6-0.

City Facilities

The City Facilities Committee has three policy recommendations to send to the City Council as part of the Task Force's report.

Recommend that the City Council encourage the three public safety departments (Police, Fire, and Emergency Management Services) work aggressively to co-locate their headquarters.

During the committee's deliberations, the Austin Police Department, Austin Fire Department, and the Austin-Travis County Emergency Management Services Department proposed construction of new headquarters estimated to cost \$154.4 Million combined. (Austin Fire Department proposed a joint Fire/EMS headquarters be built as a replacement for Fire Station 1 currently located downtown). Both proposals would place the new headquarters in or near downtown, and a key component in both proposals would involve identifying and purchasing suitable land.

During discussions on both proposals, police, fire, and EMS representatives indicated that they had been involved in discussions regarding possible co-location of headquarters on a public safety campus that would accommodate all public safety needs, a concept that the committee wholeheartedly endorses. Since these discussions are ongoing and planning and design for new headquarters would be greatly affected by a decision to either co-locate or build separate facilities on separate sites, the committee did not feel that either proposal should be funded until these key issues are resolved.

The committee recommends that the City Council encourage a thorough exploration of the possibilities of co-location, with a review of the positive and negative aspects of the concept, before funding is dedicated to the planning and building of these new facilities.

Recommend that the board and staff of the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center review ways of using the existing facilities before seeking additional funding to meet its expansion needs. Also recommend that when the time comes to seek funding for expansion, board and staff should explore additional funding sources as well as General Obligation Bonds.

One of the community-initiated projects brought forth during the committee's work was a proposal for funding of Phase 2 of construction on the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, a project that was begun in 2007 after decades of effort from the Latino community. The proposed project would involve completion of the crescent, completion of the small theater, completion of the parking garage, and relocation of power lines. The overall cost of Phase 2 was estimated at \$43.4 Million.

Parks & Open Space

- To responsibly address the extensive, critical and near term needs of the City of Austin, we strongly recommend the total bond recommendation should be at least \$400 million.
- Sustainability measures and related expenses should be built into project designs going forward rather than being broken out as a separate item.
- PARD should work with the Rodeo Austin group and Travis County on master planning for Walter Long Park improvements.
- As feasible, the City should work to provide for public access to open space lands
- Annual City budgets should fully address ongoing maintenance in City parks and trails facilities.
- We encourage improved coordination between PARD and Public Works with respect to trails improvements for trails and greenbelts
- We encourage additional integration of planning initiatives (internal, neighborhood planning, other) for parks improvements in order to clearly present project priorities in a comprehensive and holistic way
- We support coordinated investment and clear leadership to address the needs of cultural/arts facilities in the community as indicated in Imagine Austin, including the development of a clear, comprehensive inventory of existing resources.
- Future bond advisory committees should look at the coordination and overlap of projects across functional areas and staff should work to make those areas of overlap transparent to bond advisory committees

- We encourage that funds for cemeteries be first used to protect cemetery trees and bond committees in the future be briefed on COA responsibilities for cemetery upkeep. The funding recommended as part of these bonds is intended to merely be a first installment in a program to restore and conserve our historic cemeteries.

Transportation/Mobility

- Our growing community with growing needs is exacerbated by diminished funding participation from State and Federal agencies. Cities are being forced to carry this added burden. We encourage Council to position Austin as a leader in the transportation arena by being willing and ready to tackle both regional and local mobility issues. The Committee encourages the City to explore a variety of shared funding scenarios and leverage dollars whenever possible.
- Austin's transportation system and network of public rights-of-way has great influence on how its citizens interact with the built environment and conduct our daily activities. If we are to become the city as planned for in Imagine Austin, we encourage Council to take advantage of the transformative nature of transportation projects and invest in infrastructure that supports sense of place.
- We encourage the City to find other sources of funds to accommodate repair and maintenance so that the investment of bond dollars can be stretched to accommodate the construction of a project's planned vision throughout the implementation phases.
- There is intrinsic value in designing and phasing projects to ready them for funding when opportunity arises. We encourage the City to continue to prepare projects for construction to take advantage of such funding opportunities.
- We encourage the City to continue to develop and refine prioritization mechanisms and matrices for projects and programs to accommodate cross-departmental coordination.
- As populations of need have changed in Austin, we must accommodate more transportation facilities for those who do not drive. By providing people with choices for how they go about their daily trips, we can improve mobility and support affordability.
- For too long, we have put off making improvements to IH-35 due to the perceived cost and size of the possible projects. Transportation planners have developed a series of projects that can be implemented in phases to provide real improvements in our use of IH-35. What we recommend in this report is but the first installment of what will likely be a generation of projects to rebuild and improve IH-35. We will need to be ready to identify and commit to using a variety of funding sources in order to implement the needed improvements to IH-35.

- We encourage the City to continue pursuing the development of family friendly cycling facilities that will support people of all ages and abilities in using a bicycle for their daily trips.
- We are reluctantly recommending only three years of annual system capital improvements for established transportation and mobility programs. Staff has assured us that there is sufficient existing funding to allow for five years of annual improvements. Unfortunately, we found that the cost of additional years was beyond the budget for this bond package. We all need to recognize the ongoing need for these annual capital expenditures in order to meet the needs of our growing city.

Additional draft policy recommendations provided by Heather Way:

1. We recommend that the Austin City Council adopt a resolution for the City Manager and staff to provide more public transparency in how general obligation bond funds and funds for other capital improvement projects are spent, by creating an on-line searchable database where public can access information on each project, including the project's status and location and the amount of funds budgeted and spent. The database should also include reports showing the geographic distribution of funds for transportation infrastructure projects, parks and open space, public facilities such as recreational centers and libraries, and cultural facilities. The reports should include key demographic information such as population density, projected growth, race and ethnicity, numbers of children, and income levels.
2. We recommend that the Austin City Council adopt a resolution directing the City Manager and staff to ensure, in areas where there is discretion on prioritizing projects, that general obligation bond expenditures on publicly-accessible projects are distributed across the city equitably. Heightened attention should be given to ensuring that areas of the city with high numbers of low-income households receive an equitable level of bond investments.
3. We recommend that the Austin City Council and city staff address the serious concerns raised by the residents in the 78744 zip code area regarding public safety including widespread public fears of crime and lack of an adequate police presence in the community.
4. We recommend that the Austin City Council and staff explore more aggressively options for shared-use facilities among different city departments, as well as with Travis County and Austin Independent School District and other school districts in the city limits of Austin.

5. We recommend that the Austin Police Department and Austin Fire Department explore a joint-use facility to accommodate a potential Southwest police substation and Travis Country fire station. Neither of these projects was recommended for funding for the current bond cycle, but if and when these projects do more forward, we encourage the departments to work together to have a joint-use facility. In addition, special attention to siting will need to be given to these facilities given the unique environmental considerations in the area.

6. We recommend that the Austin City Council appropriate adequate levels of funding for the on-going maintenance of the city's libraries, parks, and recreational facilities. The BEATF is concerned about the level of deterioration and deferred maintenance at many public facilities, which has led to a number of capital improvement needs that could have been avoided through more adequate levels of on-going maintenance.

7. Redo of affordable housing committee recommendation #1:

We recommend that the Austin City Council adopt a policy to target a level of affordable housing bonds in areas served by frequent public transit services (bus and rail) in higher income areas or areas undergoing gentrification, including in transit-oriented development districts.

Related Draft Imagine Austin Plan policies provided by Jeb Boyd:

Comp Plan Policies Applicable to the Bond Recommendation
(taken from Imagine Austin PC Draft 2012-4-20)

LUT P1. Align land use and transportation planning and decision-making to achieve a compact and connected city in line with the growth concept map.

LUT P3. Promote development in compact centers, communities, or along corridors that are connected by roads and transit, are designed to encourage walking and bicycling, and reduce health care, housing and transportation costs.

LUT P9. Develop and maintain consistent fiscal policies to direct public investments associated with growth and development to implement imagine Austin.

LUT P11. Promote complete street⁴ design that includes features such as traffic calming elements, street trees, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access throughout Austin, considering the safety needs of people of all ages and abilities.

LUT P14. Promote safer routes to schools for students of all ages.

LUT P15. incorporate provisions for bicycles and pedestrians into all roads such as freeways, toll roads, arterial roadways, and to and from transit stations and stops, and major activity centers.

LUT P16. educate the public on the long- range need for commitment to a commu- nity fully served by a range of transporta- tion options and the benefits of each one.

LUT P32. Assure that new development is walkable and bikable and preserves the positive characteristics of existing pedestrian- friendly environments.

LUT P33. Apply high standards of urban de- sign to ensure that “complete streets” are safe and accessible for all users. encourage people to use alternative forms of transpor- tation that are sensitive to the demands of the central texas climate.

LUT P36. Transform all major streets into vibrant, multi-functional, pedestrian-friendly corridors

LUT P38. Preserve and interpret historic resources (those objects, buildings, structures, sites, places, or districts with historic, cultural, or aesthetic significance) in Austin for residents and visitors.

LUT P41. Protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the city.

LUT P42. Retain the character of national Register and local Historic Districts and en- sure that development and redevelopment is compatible with historic resources and character.

LUT P44. Preserve and restore historic parks and recreational areas.

HN P2. expand the availability of affordable housing throughout Austin by preserving existing affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons.

HN P3. increase the availability of affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons, through new and innovative funding mechanisms, such as public/private partnerships

HN P12. identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability.

HN P13. Strengthen Austin's neighborhoods by connecting to other neighborhoods, quality schools, parks, environmental features, and other community-serving uses that are accessible by transit, walking, and bicycling.

P6. Support up-to-date infrastructure, flexible policies and programs, and adaptive reuse of buildings so that local, small, and creative businesses thrive and innovate.

E P8. Invest in, construct, and expand major multicultural facilities in Austin's Downtown.

CE P1. Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.

CE P2. conserve Austin's natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas that including the Edwards Aquifer and its contributing and recharge zones and endangered species habitat.

CE P3. expand the city's green infrastructure network to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and agricultural lands.

CE P5. expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream and water quality protection, and wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture.

CfS P29. Increase the use of joint or shared facilities between public safety and other city service providers, when possible, to provide residents with efficient services, reduce costs, and maintain public safety infrastructure.

CfS P34. improve access to neighborhood libraries to promote the establishment of complete communities throughout Austin.

CfS P35. Distribute public buildings where neighborhood services are located and other accessible locations throughout the city.

CfS P36. improve multi-modal public transportation access to the city's public buildings and facilities, including the Austin- Bergstrom international Airport.

CfS P37. integrate public buildings and facilities into active, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and complete, healthy communities.

CfS P40. Serve Austin's diverse, growing population and provide family-friendly amenities throughout the city by developing new parks and maintaining and upgrading existing parks.

CfS P41. ensure and increase equitable access to and opportunities for arts, recreation, and leisure activities for all ages throughout the city.

CfS P42. increase connectivity between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to parks and greenways through the use of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, and trails. (

CfS P45. expand the amount of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas for use as open space and passive recreational areas.

S P1. Provide access to primary, preventive health, trauma, specialty care, and urgent care.

S P3. encourage more active lifestyles through new and redevelopment that supports walking and bicycling. Locate retail, services, and public facilities such as parks, health services, and libraries in or near neighborhoods to reduce traffic congestion and contribute to an improved sense of community.

S P4. Reduce homelessness through long-term supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.

S P25. increase sidewalks and bicycle lanes in neighborhoods to create safer routes to schools, parks, and transit stops.

S P29. create public spaces that attract and engage children and serve as gathering places for children and families.